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A  
MOTHER'S LEGACY;

OR,

SABBATH EVENING COUNSELS

TO

HER SONS AND DAUGHTERS.

BY MRS. NANCY SPROAT,

LATE OF TAUNTON, MASS.

AUTHOR OF POETIC WORKS FOR THE YOUNG, ETC.



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# CONTENTS.

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I. Early religion -----	7
II. Family discord -----	12
III. Filial duty -----	17
IV. Study of the Bible -----	22
V. Prayer -----	27
VI. Dangers of the world -----	33
VII. Emptiness of earthly pursuits -----	38
VIII. Temptations -----	41
IX. Truth -----	48
X. Justice -----	53
XI. Mercy -----	58
XII. Humility -----	63
XIII. Gratitude -----	69
XIV. Unbelief -----	73
XV. The Sabbath -----	78
XVI. Time -----	83
XVII. View of the divine hand -----	88
XVIII. The fall and recovery of man -----	92
XIX. Future life -----	99
XX. Future punishment -----	104
XXI. Three natures of man -----	110
XXII. Retrospection -----	116
XXIII. Resignation to God's will -----	121
XXIV. Trust in God -----	127
XXV. Divine goodness -----	133



MRS. SPROAT was an earnest and devoted Christian mother. Notwithstanding the cares of a large family and its many domestic duties, the minds of her children were not neglected. The tenor of her whole life exerted a happy influence upon all about her. Poetry was natural to her; and while at her daily avocations, she would often weave her thoughts into rhyme, for the amusement and instruction of her children.

An innate love of the beautiful in nature impelled her to draw their thoughts often to the glorious handiwork of the Creator; and in all her writings is seen a pure and confident trust in her Redeemer, betokening how fully she was imbued with the priceless blessings of his grace. It was often her custom, on the Sabbath, to gather her little flock about her, after divine service, and discourse to

them on religious and other important subjects in connection, holding their attention by the power of her poetic imagery and richness of illustration. Many of these addresses are preserved, and have proved a rich legacy to her children and grandchildren. The following pages originated in this way, and are now given to the public, with the hope that they may prove pleasant and profitable to many.

S. A. S.



## A MOTHER'S LEGACY.

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### I.

#### EARLY RELIGION.

“When life before your path is bright,  
And fancy sheds its golden light,  
And you the dawning future deem  
As radiant as your own bright dream,  
Ere yet its after-path be trod,  
Remember your Creator God.”

FLOWERS of eloquence and the entreaties of parental affection have power to lead the young from the dangerous paths of error into the pleasant walks of heavenly wisdom. But unless you lend a listening ear—unless you strive yourselves to seek these pleasant paths—eloquence and affection will urge and entreat in vain.

You do not wholly disbelieve the truth, that when this life is past you will be happy

or miserable for ever; but perhaps are thinking to postpone your choice to a future day. This consideration, though stained with black ingratitude to Him who offers you eternal happiness, might have some force if you were certain of the continuance of life; but the present moment is all you are sure of, and on this moment your everlasting welfare may hang. Should you be spared even to old age, if you spend your days in forgetfulness of God, and in those habits of sin which are the sure consequences of that forgetfulness, you may find they are too strong to be so easily broken as you think, as sin is undoubtedly strengthened by repetition. And if you refuse to give the prime of your life to the service of your Creator, there is no certainty that he will accept you when that time is past, when your energies are blunted, and your best powers perhaps degraded and weakened. No, my children, you cannot begin *too early*. If a man owned a fine field, which was capable of producing a plentiful crop, what would you think to see him idle away the spring and summer, and begin to plant in September?

Perhaps, from the self-denial that religion imposes, and the apparent sadness of some weak Christians, you may have been led to conclude that Christianity is a gloomy path; but this is a mistake. The direct tendency of true religion is, to make men cheerful and happy. Believers should go on their way rejoicing. If they have many comforts, they view them as coming from the hand of a Father, and receive them thankfully. If they have troubles, they know they have an almighty Friend who is able to deliver them, and they rejoice in his power; for they are persuaded he will not suffer them to bear a single affliction that is not absolutely necessary. They love to think much of God, because he is the best of beings. They adore his character, admire his government; they love his commands. If they meet with difficulties, they carry them immediately to him, requesting that they may be overruled for their best good, and trust they shall be heard and answered. They are not afraid to die, for they believe as soon as they leave this world, they shall begin their best life; and as they fear not death, they have no other fear.

They alone have true courage. They feel they have a great and glorious Friend to whom all things must bow, and to serve him most acceptably is their constant endeavor. For this purpose they will cheerfully perform every duty, and thankfully embrace every opportunity of doing good. They cannot find in their hearts to hate any human being, but sincerely wish that all would forsake their sins, and love and obey their Maker; because this would make them amiable here, and happy for ever hereafter. And they look forward with delight to their release from a world of shadows, and admission into a state of felicity which knows no disappointment and no alloy, where sickness and death and sin and sorrow will be at an end for ever;

“Where everlasting spring abides  
And never withering flowers.”

My children, is not this a prize worth striving for? Good and evil are set before you, let your choice determine which shall be your position. Let me entreat you not to defer it another day; no, not another hour: determine, and look to God to confirm your deter-

mination, that from this moment you will obey the injunction, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind."

"To Him the early dawn be given;  
The noontide blaze, the dew of even;  
Be his the uttered song of praise,  
And his the silent prayer you raise;  
In life or death, in grief or joy,  
Let him your grateful thoughts employ."

## II.

## FAMILY DISCORD.

“That love its holy influence pour,  
To keep us meek, and make us free,  
And throw its binding blessings more  
Round each with all, and all with thee.”

WATTS.

My dear children, the last Sabbath I endeavored to point out to you the vast importance of early piety. I now wish to speak, in the hope of aiding you to battle with the foes and temptations that will continually rise up to lead you away from your goal; and I name as one of the first and nearest foes, that which you may find in your own home. I have no doubt of the reality and sincerity of your affection for each other, but I have observed with concern that a jarring spirit too often strikes upon the chords of our domestic harmony; and I confess I dread to see the demon Discord enter this mansion of love.

Should discord rise to hatred, should a settled animosity freeze the current of our

home-born joys, what would then be left on earth desirable for us, your parents, who have carried you in our bosoms, and laid your happiness upon our hearts? You may possibly wonder that I should anticipate a consequence so fearful from the trivial circumstance of petty altercations; but if you discerned an enemy at a distance, would you sit down quietly and wait till he had entered your territory and taken possession of your country before you attempted to oppose him? No, you would rise to arms at once, and give yourselves no rest till you had expelled him from your coasts. Believe me, my children, sin is the most encroaching, most subtle, and most dangerous of enemies. It winds into every shape to attract your eyes; it mantles itself into the semblance of innocence, to allure you from the path of duty; and sometimes assumes even the playfulness of childhood, to decoy you to ruin. Its first approaches are generally small and almost imperceptible; but its advances are rapid and deadly, like a plague-spot, which if not speedily extracted, will pollute the whole mass of blood, and destroy the life. Ask the robber, the murderer, condemn-



ed to execution, what began his first career of crime, and he will tell you, petty theft; that once his conscience was tender, and he would have recoiled with horror from the deed which is now to cost him his life; but that repeated acts of wickedness hardened his heart, till he could strip the last garment from the shivering orphan, and plunge the fatal steel in its widowed mother's breast. But you may be ready to exclaim, There is surely no resemblance between the trifling agitations in a family, and flagrant violation of the law.

My children, society is made up of families. The plants which bud in the nursery of home are to blossom in the world. The foundations of virtue and vice are laid while you are under the paternal roof; the feelings which are cultivated, the habits which are formed here will, as far as your influence extends, exalt and refine, or pollute and debase society. If you are mild, patient, and obliging at home, you will not only insure to yourselves respect and affection abroad, but your example may be imitated by your associates; and that very imitation will confirm and strengthen your virtues.



But if you are petulant, harsh, and unyielding among those with whom you are connected by the ties of nature and interest, you will not be likely to acquire gentler dispositions or more conciliatory manners by an intercourse with strangers. No, my children, the air of the world is poisonous ; you must carry an antidote with you, or the infection will prove fatal.

It is a wise and benignant appointment of Providence, that mankind should be classed in families. The constant and reciprocal obligations which rivet the affections of parent and child, of brother and sister, would never have sweetened the journey of life, had the human race been formed to exist without the affection of kindred union. What a pity is it then to frustrate a purpose so benign—to break the order of a system planned by Heaven itself—to introduce discord and confusion into abodes which the God of nature has formed for the residence of peace. The being who dares do this shall not be held guiltless. Let it be henceforth our earnest endeavor to accord with the design of our merciful Father. Let dissension be looked

upon as an invader, and let us join hand in hand to crush it. "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water." Let us avoid its beginnings; let contradiction be unknown: if offence should arise, let us remember that "a soft answer turneth away wrath," and that "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." A blessing from heaven will no doubt be shed upon exertions like these; and when you are separated, as you probably will be, and scattered in different parts of the earth, it will be most sweet to recollect that, when you lived together, you lived in love. As I close my remarks to you to-day, a Persian precept comes to mind:

"Forgive thy foes; nor that alone,  
Their evil deeds with good repay;  
Fill those with joy who leave thee now,  
And kiss the hand upraised to slay."

## III.

## FILIAL DUTY.

MUCH has been written upon the principles of government; and such is the nature and character of man, that subordination is absolutely necessary for the security and order of society. The child must be subject to the parent, the parent to the magistrate, the magistrate to the higher civil authority, and that to the laws; and this subjection, suitably observed, constitutes the safety and harmony of the nation. Were it otherwise—were children to throw off all obedience to parents, parents to act their pleasure independent of magistrates, inferior rulers to reject the supreme authority, and the highest executive itself disregard the laws—it does not require the eye of prophecy to perceive that the most fearful confusion, uproar, and destruction would speedily follow.

But this is taking a political view of the subject; let us now retire to families, and ex-

amine some of the natural reasons why children should be subject to parents.

If your parents have been faithful, they loved you before you loved yourselves. With anxious solicitude, they watched your necessities and supplied your wants before you were capable of knowing the hand that fed you. Wearisome days and sleepless nights they spent in your service. They considered no task too arduous, no fatigue too great that nature could sustain, when ministering to your comfort. Their sympathies were alive to your sorrows and your joys. If you suffered, they were grieved; if you were well and happy, they were delighted. Their time, their property, their food and rest were sacrificed for your benefit. As you advanced in years, their anxieties increased. The formation of your character, the improvement of your minds, and the welfare of your souls engaged their solicitude. When you deviated from the path of duty, and correction became necessary, with what reluctance was it inflicted. The punishment which reason urged, would not tenderness willingly have borne in your stead? To see you good and

happy was the fervent wish of their hearts; and to accomplish this object so desirable, instruction was heaped on instruction, and entreaty followed entreaty.

They saw you launching into a world of whose deceptions you were utterly ignorant—a world whose pleasures they had tried, and found them vain—whose promises they had once believed, till experience discovered they were false. They deprived you of present gratification, solely to insure your future benefit; and when the gripe seemed hard that caught you from the verge of danger, it was always the severity of love.

And now, my children, what return ought you to make for such a series of watchful care, of affectionate attentions? Is grateful obedience too much? Is dutiful submission and filial tenderness an unreasonable demand? Oh could you know with what anguish the unkindness of a child wrings a parent's heart, I am persuaded you would shrink from the thought.

But there is one consideration to induce obedience to parents, of infinitely more importance than any I have mentioned; and

that is, the command, promises, and threatenings of God. In various parts of Scripture this duty is forcibly enjoined. Let me select a few :

“Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” “Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death.” “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.” “Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.” “Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.” “Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.” “He that wasteth his father and chaseth away his mother is a son that causeth shame and bringeth reproach.” “Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.” “Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith it is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer.”

The promise of long life, you may observe,



is annexed to the command of honoring your father and your mother; and the Scripture observes, it "is the first commandment with promise." After authority so indisputable, I hope you will not need any persuasion to a duty so important and indispensable. I say not this, my children, to accuse you of neglect, but to secure you in the practice of a prime duty from the best motives.

## IV.

## STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

"READ other books," says an excellent writer, "but *study* the Bible." To this most pleasing and important, yet much neglected study, let me now call your attention.

The fondness which so much prevails, especially among young people, for light reading, is a strong proof of the corruption of the mental tastes. Scripture narrative has every thing to engage the attention of a lover of truth; and were not the mind vitiated, it would be impossible to read it without instruction and pleasure. It is clear, concise, abounding with incident.

Never were such a variety of important and interesting facts so plainly related in so few words as those in the sacred records. Volumes of human composition would not contain so much truly useful historic knowledge as is comprised in a few chapters of this wonderful book. Its delineations of char-



acter are accurate and impartial, and its pathetic descriptions such as must reach every heart that can feel. No person of sensibility can read the story of the viceroy of Egypt unmoved.

But history is only a part of its excellence. The poetical beauties of Scripture are inimitable. The attempts of the best English poets to versify the Psalms and other portions of Scripture poetry, afford a striking proof of the inferiority of the human pencil to the pen of inspiration. If you are charmed with sublimity of thought, with striking metaphor, bold imagery, and all the varied sweetness of description—if you wish to contemplate nature arrayed in the grandeur of her majesty, or examine her *dishabille* in the secrecy of retirement—if you wish to view her face when frowning with the storms of winter, or dimpling with the smiles of spring, read the Bible.

But aside from the gratification of taste, the feast of mind, our united and individual *interest* in the sacred volume should impel us to examine it with the closest attention. Its precepts are given as a rule of life for man,

and it is impossible to conceive of a code of laws so wise, so beneficent, so well suited to the necessities of our state, and so calculated to promote our happiness, as the precepts of the Bible. It was observed by a former president of our Congress, that "if the book of Proverbs only was practised from; there would be no such thing as bankruptcy, failures of payment, or family contentions in the world."

But here perhaps an objection may arise from your own insufficiency. You may be ready to say, "I acknowledge the commands of God are wise and good; but I have disobeyed them, have made myself so sinful that I am now unable to obey them; why then should I read the Bible?" I answer, for this very reason you should read it, because it contains not only a law to govern us, but a blessed Gospel also, to recover the law-breakers from the ruin they have brought upon themselves. By violating the divine law, we have exposed ourselves to its penalty, which is "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord;" but the Bible proclaims pardon and salvation to every sinner who will forsake his sins and return to the path of

duty. Hear its compassionate language :  
“O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but  
in me is thy help.”

We cannot be in any situation in life wherein the Scriptures will not apply to us, either in reproof, instruction, or consolation. Its promises should be treasured up in our minds, and its precepts written upon our hearts. It cannot be read too early, believed in too confidently, or obeyed too implicitly. It directs all our actions, and reaches all our necessities. Let me then alter the question, and ask, Why should we *not* read the Bible? In the bloom of youth, in the glow of health, and encircled by friends, you see not the beauty of religion, because you feel not the need of its supports. But remember, my beloved children, that youth and health and friends are passing away; that the days of sickness and desertion, and even death, are approaching; and how much will you then need its consolations.

If you love yourselves, if you value your future peace, choose now for your friend that Being who will never disappoint nor forsake you. Such a choice will save you

from a thousand snares, and ten thousand sins. It will give you peace in your own bosoms, and make you blessings to society. And if you should be spared to advanced life, it will give you inexpressible comfort to reflect that your prime was dedicated to God. How sweet, how consoling would it then be, to look up with humble confidence to your Father in heaven, and hear him saying, "I remember the kindness of thy youth."

What situation can excite such deep compassion as an old age without a hope in heaven? Let me conjure you by every endearing, by every solemn consideration, to avoid an evil so dreadful by devoting yourselves without delay to Him who has demanded your hearts. And that you may be directed, encouraged, and strengthened in every duty, let me now entreat you to begin, as a *daily* practice, and continue as long as life shall last, to *read the Bible*.

## V.

## PRAYER.

“PRAYER,” says an excellent writer, “is a great duty, and as great a privilege.” That it is a *duty*, no one will deny who recollects how frequently it is enjoined in the sacred writings; and that it is a privilege, no one will be disposed to controvert who has ever felt the burden of sin, and fled for refuge to a crucified Saviour. The distance between God and his creatures is inconceivable. He is the “high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity;” we are as mites upon this speck of earth. Prayer annihilates, if I may so speak, the immeasurable distance, and introduces us into the court of heaven. The devout soul, in this exalted exercise, rises beyond the boundaries of creation, leaves intervening worlds behind, and rests in the bosom of God.

Some persons appear to have the idea that they have no right to pray until they are

sanctified ; but this is as absurd as for a sick man to wait till he is well before sending for a physician. The more violent the disease, the more is the necessity of a physician ; and the more sinful a human being, the greater is his need of pardon. If you are convinced that you are sinful, and want to be forgiven and reconciled to your Creator, you are in the very situation to pray.

But possibly this is not your case: perhaps you feel cold and indifferent as to your eternal welfare ; are so engaged in this world's pursuits that you think little of the next ; and when the thought is obtruded upon you, it is unwelcome, and you endeavor to drive it from your minds. Perhaps it pains you to reflect that there is a Being to whom you are accountable, and you would be willing to be for ever separated from him.

If these are your feelings, you need prayer, if possible, more than in the other case ; for this is spiritual blindness. Your Maker surrounds you, and you see him not. He shines upon you in the sun, and refreshes you in the air. He covers the field with grain for your sustenance. and hangs the bough with fruit



for your gratification ; and do you wish to forget him ? He is not only around, but within you. He moves your every pulse and supplies your every breath, expands your frame and strengthens your limbs, guards you through a thousand dangers which you see not, and guides you in a path of safety, when you are unconscious of the hand that leads you ; and are you willing to be separated from him ?

Oh, my children, absence from God is absence from all happiness. Whatever ideas you may have had of future punishment, it is in reality that state from which the Almighty withdraws his gracious presence ; and it is a misery beyond all human conception dreadful. Since He is the alone source of beauty and excellence, there can be nothing in the wide universe beautiful or excellent but from his influence ; and were those influences withheld, nothing but the most hideous deformity would be seen in every object.

Wherever his Spirit breathes, there is loveliness ; and to be guided by this Spirit till we are wholly transformed into his amiable likeness, should be the constant desire of

every rational creature. If you want these blessings, ask for them. If you do *not* want them—if you are willing to go on in sin till you sink in the pit of irremediable perdition—lose not a moment, but pray instantly, pray fervently, that you may be awakened from a lethargy so fearful, and conducted to a place of safety.

Ponder these things in your hearts; let not the trifling concerns of this little world fill your minds: you were made for nobler purposes; you are endued with such high capacities, that even the angels are watching to see how you improve them. The eye of God is ever upon you, and he is as willing as he is able to bless you, if you will be blessed. All nature is ministering to your good; every thing that you behold directs you to heaven; every rational enjoyment bids you look to the Giver; nay, the very emptiness of those objects which have disappointed you, speaks this powerful language: “Seek not in us a happiness which God alone can bestow.”

Holiness, peace, and joy are the gifts of the Almighty; and they are obtained by prayer. Early prayer is acceptable to Him who has



said, "They that seek me early shall find me;" "I remember the kindness of thy youth." The humble petition of a contrite heart was never offered in vain. But remember, you have no right to expect any good, if you will not ask for it. God is infinitely merciful, and he has borne with you a long time; but you have no assurance that he will continue to bear, if you continue disobedient.

What has hitherto prevented your falling into every species of wickedness of which you are capable? Nothing but the restraining grace of God. Should he let go his hold, should he leave you to yourselves, you would become altogether as vile as the most abandoned. Oh then, if you love yourselves, provoke him not to forsake you. All manner of wretchedness is comprehended in that dreadful word. Determine that you will never henceforth live without prayer. Resolve that, according to the advice of the pious Dr. Watts, you will never venture into the world "till you have solemnly committed yourself to the grace of Christ;" and never lay your head upon your pillow without first giving yourself into the arms of your heavenly Fa-

ther. If you follow this practice with perseverance and sincerity, your faith will grow strong, your hopes bright, your lives pure. Peace will descend upon your spirits like "dew upon the mown grass;" and you will increase in every virtue, till you become inhabitants of that world where sin and sorrow and death can never enter. Let me entreat you to think of this important duty, and attend to it; and may the Divine blessing rest upon you.

## VI.

## DANGERS OF THE WORLD.

WHAT employment is more delightful, what sight more interesting, than a circle of dutiful and ingenuous children, patiently bending the attentive ear to the instructions of an affectionate parent? Youthful inexperience asks a guide; and who is so qualified for that important office as those who, with the fondest solicitude, have watched your capacities, your dispositions, and your feelings, from the very first dawn of reason to the opening day? A multitude may be ready to give you their advice; but among the multitude it is rare to find a friend. Youthful counsellors, if not selfish and deceitful, are generally ignorant, and therefore unfit to be the advisers of youth; but from parents you have no deceit, no selfishness to fear; their wishes for your happiness are sincere and ardent; and as they have trod every step of the road which you have now entered, their experience enables

them to point out the dangers of the way, and to lead you in the most safe and pleasant paths. The joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears which now influence you, once influenced them, and from similar causes; they can therefore enter deeply into your feelings, make the kindest allowances for your errors, and even your faults.

But although they feel every disposition of forbearance and forgiveness, they are tremblingly alive, not only to your everlasting welfare, but to your reputation in the world; and while they search your failures with an Argus eye, they would fain screen them with an impenetrable veil from the view of your fellow-creatures.

There are indulgences which you must expect from none but parents. Many will try to discover your faults, not to conceal, but to expose them. The unprincipled and designing will not only be blind to your virtues, but will perhaps endeavor to take advantage of your weaknesses, and turn your follies to their own account. Those who are destitute of goodness cannot bear to see it in others, because they feel it a reproach to themselves.

Persons of this description therefore, if they perceive that you are actuated by religious sentiments, will probably join with your spiritual enemy in trying to laugh you out of them. Nobody can *reason* away religion, because religion is reason itself; but with young people, ridicule is a much more powerful weapon than argument. Many a young man would follow a good practice against every kind of opposition "except a sneer;" *that* he could not stand. This Satan knows as well as we, and therefore makes use of this engine to upset the good resolutions of youthful minds. From such companions, my children, I entreat you to turn away.

But though you have many enemies to encounter, your merciful Creator has not brought you into a world where there are none but enemies. Numerous as are the foes of Christianity, yet numerous also are its friends. There are millions of amiable beings on earth, who are travelling fast to heaven, and if you will walk in that road, you will have them for your company. Could we look to the end of the path—could we behold the wretches who once slighted a Saviour shut

up in the prison of darkness and despair, gnawing their tongues for pain—could we lift our eyes to the heavenly world, and see the friends of Jesus crowned with bliss, traversing the fields of light with unutterable joy, and tuning their golden harps to the praise of their Redeemer—could we have one glimpse of that smile which irradiates all heaven beaming on their happy souls, and hear the sweet and cheering voice of that Shepherd whom, when on earth, they loved and followed, saying, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”—could we behold all this, think you we should hesitate which class of associates to choose?

But we are more willing to receive the recompense than to do the service. We wish to be happy hereafter, but we do not like to practise self-denial here; and yet when our selfish feelings rise against our duty, we must practise it, or we cannot receive the reward of obedience. What soldier ever gained a victory without fighting a battle? And if the perishing things of earth are so valuable that men will risk their lives to obtain them,



surely the immense inheritance of heaven is worth a struggle.

After all, there is no comparison between the severity of the world's demands and those of religion. Health, peace, and even life are frequent sacrifices to *that* idol. But sin is the most cruel and faithless of taskmasters. It promises happiness, but never bestows it; its requisitions are costly, but there is no reward; when all is spent in its service, nothing is gained but reproaches and stripes. What has that wretch obtained who has drained away his life at the bottle? a galling conscience and a miserable death. Nor does the final perseverance in any other vice less certainly insure perdition. In whatever heart sin reigns, there does a poisonous dart rankle, which, if not extracted, will ruin its peace and insure its destruction. But the Rose of Sharon is without a thorn; it is fragrant, and its fragrance never cloy; it is beautiful, and its beauty will not fade. Its value is infinite; it cannot be purchased, but all who will may receive it, for it is the "gift of God."

## VII.

## EMPTINESS OF EARTHLY PURSUITS.

THE recovery of that happiness which was lost by the apostasy has engaged the attention of mankind from the fall of Adam to the present day. All ranks, all orders of persons, from the king to the beggar, have been and still are eagerly pursuing the same object by every means that imagination can devise. No region has been left unexplored, no method untried, no path untrodden. Avarice has hoarded his treasures, Pleasure varied her enchantments, and Fame sounded the trumpet of praise to make men happy; but in vain. The soul can drink of felicity but from one source, and that source is divine. It is a common mistake of the thoughtless and of the vain, that Christianity requires greater self-denials than the world. Let me ask you what desirable object can be obtained *without* self-denial? The votary of earthly pleasure must begin by making sacrifices. If



you would be wealthy, learned, or honorable, you must frequently forego not only the *amusements* of which youth is so fond, but even the innocent comforts of food and rest, or you will miss the prize.

And what is this mighty prize? Is it wealth; is it honor; is it learning; is it sensual pleasures? Ask that wicked rich man what are his enjoyments; and if he dare be honest, something like this perhaps will be his reply: "I have labored many years in the pursuit of wealth, and accumulated a large fortune, which has given me what the world calls independence; but I am the most dependent of all beings. My cares have increased in proportion to my riches, and I feel anxieties which I never felt when I was poor. I am in continual apprehension of losing what I possess, or of leaving it. I am in dread of robbers, of fires, of bankruptcies. I am perplexed with faithless stewards, with dishonest servants, with insolvent debtors. Money will not relieve me when I am in pain, or quiet the reproaches of my conscience, or calm my mind under the terrors of death. The peasant rises from his simple meal as

much refreshed and more thankful than I from my dainty repast. The laborer sleeps more soundly on his bundle of straw than I on my bed of down; and I feel no happier in my costly robes than the beggar in his rags."

But perhaps you think the path of *honor* will present a fairer view. And what is human honor? It is the shadow of a shade; it is a bubble lighter than air, which the breath that blows it up will burst. The voice which vociferates applause to-day, will perhaps as loudly proclaim disgrace to-morrow. Should a ship cast anchor in a mountainous billow which is sliding fast away to sink her in the gulf below, it would be no unfit emblem of him who builds his hopes on the world's favor; the act would be no more senseless, nor the ruin more sure.

But *learning*, you may say, learning has none of these disadvantages; this must be a solid foundation for happiness. "Learning," says a celebrated author, "is the best *human* thing;" and let me add, learning, in the hand of religion, is like the gentle moon whose borrowed rays cheer the traveller in the absence of the sun; but unconnected with piety,

it will prove an ignis fatuus to decoy him to destruction, or at best a meteor which dazzles and expires.

Let us now inquire whether forbidden pleasure has any thing to bestow worthy the pursuit of a rational being. By such pleasure, I mean every species of sinful gratification. This is the sorceress who has decoyed millions to destruction. She holds to your lips the cup of joy, but poison is in the draught; she places a rose on your bosom, but the thorn pierces your heart; she is the syren who sings conscience asleep, the enchantress who draws a film over the eye of reason, which hides the beauty of virtue; and woe to the wretch who recovers his sight only to behold his ruin.

If then neither wealth nor honor, learning nor pleasure, will insure happiness, where is the treasure to be found? When the Creator entrusted man with the keeping of his own felicity, he sinfully squandered it away. Since that, it is laid up for him in heaven, and it is in vain to look for it as disunited with a future world. We have a right to desire happiness, but we should see to it that

our desires do not halt on earth, instead of pressing upwards to the sky. Shall the being who can soar beyond the stars, who can contemplate the infinite Deity, who can cling to the footstool of his throne, and even imitate his moral perfections—shall such a being waste his noble energies in chasing a butterfly, in digging among the rubbish of a fallen world for fragments of enjoyment, when he is invited to quaff his fill at the fountain of immortality? Let us without delay comply with the apostle's exhortation, "Let us lay aside every weight," let us shake off the stupor of sense, and set our faces like a flint for the mansions of bliss. Were our lives to close with time, it would be of small consequence whether I entreated or you listened; but the existence has begun which shall never have an end. Is it not of the utmost moment that that existence should be happy?

Could we look over the battlements which divide time from eternity, and behold in the regions of despair those miserable beings who are lamenting with anguish of soul their wasted lives, how invaluable would our time appear, how anxious should we feel to em-

ploy every moment to the best advantage. Or could we raise our eyes to the fields of light, and see the happy sons and daughters of God tasting the sweet and gracious rewards of obedience beneath the smiles of his countenance, and joining with rapture the song of praise which swells in ceaseless harmony along the ethereal vault, how would our spirits be invigorated with new desires to exert every power in the service of such a Father, and become partakers of such an immense felicity.

It is no invention of priestcraft, it is no rhapsody of a heated imagination, but a solemn truth, that we must "all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." Every one of us must be present at that bar, and hear the decisive sentence; and when the ravished multitude of justified souls are taking possession of their seats in the abodes of bliss, how does imagination shrink from the chilling thought that one of this dear circle should be commanded to "depart." That we may be saved from so heart-rending a scene, let us pour out our fervent supplications at the footstool of almighty grace.



## VIII.

## T E M P T A T I O N S .

You have entered on the journey of life, my children, and your way lies through a wilderness where every step is dangerous, where serpents hiss, beasts of prey howl, and snares are spread in every direction to entangle your feet; how do you need a guard and a guide to protect you from harm, and to lead you safely through the dreary wild. But, to drop metaphor, you are in a sinful world, where you have many duties to perform and many powerful temptations to withstand; not only outward opposition from your fellow-creatures, but evil propensities within, besides a secret and subtle adversary who spares no pains to decoy you to ruin. How much then do you need the Spirit of divine grace to enable you to overcome your wicked inclinations, to resist the suggestions of Satan, and furnish every needful requisite to the obedience of love.

A human being in the world without religion may be fitly compared to a ship on a boisterous ocean, under full sail, without rudder or ballast, at the mercy of every blast and every wave. In a world like this, we have virtues to cultivate and temptations to overcome; and let it ever be kept in mind, that every conquest over temptation is a proportionable advance in the road to bliss.

Since I have mentioned temptations, I would observe that there are certain species of them to which some persons are more exposed than others: for instance, young men are more liable to fall into the sins of profanity and intemperance than young women, because their avocations frequently lead them among those who practise these vices. And as sin is contagious, what they often see and hear they may at length be induced to imitate, although at first perhaps it might have excited their abhorrence. The most prudent caution should be used in avoiding these scenes of danger, since by a needless exposure we become our own tempters, than which nothing can be more irrational. The shameful practice of tavern-haunting, which



has so prevailed in our country, has perhaps been the ruin of thousands who might have been useful members of society, if they had only exerted resolution enough to keep away from this *occasion* of temptation.

Taverns were originally intended for the accommodation of travellers, not a receptacle for gamblers, drinkers, swearers, etc.; and those who use them for these purposes abuse the privilege of an inn while they destroy themselves. I know not of any irregularity in my sons which has made these observations applicable to them; but I beg they would receive them by way of caution, as it is much easier to avoid a sin than to repent of it.

Riches are another species of temptation which assails both sexes. I do not wish you to be indifferent about a comfortable subsistence in the world, but I hope you will remember that your high-born souls, which were made to sail among the spheres, will not stoop to be tied to a bag of sordid ore till you have done violence to their exalted nature. When the love of money has taken possession of the breast, it is steeled to the

finer feelings of humanity, and the whole mind is debased to a level with the dust from which the shining idol was dug.

When money is used to procure the conveniences and comforts of life, and to relieve the wants of our fellow-creatures, it is innocently employed, and may be a rich blessing; but when it is made a handmaid of vice, or is hoarded up to be worshipped, it unavoidably becomes a curse.

The great difficulty is, we are apt to feel ourselves at home in the wilderness, when we are in reality only wayfaring men journeying as fast as time can move to another country. We should not consider any thing abiding in a land where every thing is speedily passing away; and while we improve the blessings of time with diligence and gratitude, we should remember that "this is not our rest;" but raising the eye of faith to a "better country," where there are no changes, no temptations, no sins, and no sorrows, take courage and fight our way through, till we possess the heavenly inheritance which will last for ever and for ever.

## IX.

## TRUTH.

“Whatever dims thy sense of truth,  
Or stains thy purity,  
Though light as breath of summer air,  
Count it as sin to thee.”

THE importance of a sacred regard to truth cannot be too strongly impressed on the youthful mind. Without it the character becomes contemptible, and the soul is endangered. If the nature and tendency of falsehood were duly considered, the view would excite abhorrence and dread. Its nature is to invert the order of things, to blind the mind to beauty, and bring it in love with deformity; to deceive us into a belief of things which are not. Its tendency is to ruin our peace by preventing our trust in God, and causing us to trust in vanity. Were falsehood to be universally practised, the order and harmony of society would be destroyed. If we could believe nothing we

heard, if we could depend on no one's promise, what confusion would pervade the world.

Another dangerous characteristic of this subtle enemy is, that it acts under a cover. It shrinks from a strict scrutiny. It skulks in darkness. It throws a veil over religion by representing it as gloomy and undesirable. It would even make Deity himself appear unlovely and unkind. It is opposed to all goodness; it is the spawn of the devil.

Truth, on the contrary, shows objects in their real light. It displays the beauty of virtue, and exposes the hideousness of vice; it prevents us from depending on any earthly objects for happiness, by discovering their utter insufficiency to satisfy our desires. It leads us to place our whole confidence in our Creator, by revealing him to us as the kindest of Fathers and the most powerful of friends. It shows us that religion is the path of peace and the way to bliss. It seeks no concealment; it holds its fair open forehead to the light of day, and invites examination. The more it is known, the more it will be admired. It is the friend of goodness, the offspring of God.

There is a species of falsehood practised by the unthinking part of the world, and sometimes even by those who would not willingly be guilty of what they thought falsehood, which disguises itself under the name of *extravagant expression*. This is often used in a comparative sense; as, for instance, if a thing is somewhat larger than another, the extravagant speaker will say it is a thousand times bigger; or, if he means to give a decided preference to a thing of double the value of another, he will say it is worth a hundred of it. Now if speech is given us to convey right ideas of things, is it not a perversion of the gift when we use it to convey wrong ones? If the words thus spoken were literally taken, what unjust views should we have. You may possibly think there could be no evil in such a manner of expression, because it is not meant to deceive; but if it is false, there is harm in it; and if it is not true, what is it but false?

Non-performance of trifling engagements is another species of falsehood. You promise that you will make a call, or take a walk at an appointed time, not considering wheth-



er it will be practicable or not; and when the season arrives, you perceive some inconvenience in the performance, and break your word. There can be no difficulty in fixing the stamp of this action.

You may possibly think me too scrupulous; but as right or wrong will always preponderate, it is certainly of consequence to know into which scale we cast our mite. Should you see a bowl of hellebore, which you knew would kill you if you drank it all, when perhaps a sixteenth part might not prove fatal, would you from this belief venture to taste it? No, you would not touch it; you would think, "Its nature is poisonous," and you would turn from it with loathing.

But, reasoning apart, lying is absolutely forbidden by the word of God. Scripture expressly informs us that "all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Awful denunciation! and by a power from which there is no appeal—from a book which is given us for our guide and consolation, and from which we shall at last be judged.

“O God, whose presence glows in all,  
Within, around us, and above,  
Thy word we bless, thy name we call,  
Whose word is truth, whose name is love.”

“Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life ;  
Grant us to know that way,  
That truth to keep, that life to win,  
Which leads to endless day.”



## X.

## JUSTICE.

“Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.”

Upon a slight survey of these concise directions, my children, you may perhaps conclude this is no very difficult task: that to “do justly,” is to forbear cheating and stealing; to “love mercy,” is not to be cruel; and “to walk humbly,” not to be proud. True, it is all this; but if we examine the words in all their bearings, we may find they mean still more. Let us take the first direction.

Cheating and stealing are the last and most atrocious acts of injustice. But we can certainly act from this bad principle, and be absolutely guilty of breaking the law of justice, without doing what is called by the world cheating and stealing. Suppose you are a trader, and are selling a man a piece of goods which you know is damaged, and he does not; if you do not tell him it is sound

cloth, yet if you suffer him to pay the full price for it through ignorance, you are guilty of downright injustice. There are sins of *omission* as well as *commission*. We are placed in this world in a certain sense dependent on each other, and commanded to use our powers for our mutual advantage, and each individual has a claim to the services of others, and owes them his own. This is a constitution for general benefit, and which we have no right to alter. If you see the property of a fellow-creature in danger, and neglect to save it when it is in your power, you are guilty of injustice.

But this virtue is not confined to property. Mankind have a far more valuable treasure than this, and more easily wounded; this is character. A celebrated poet puts these words into the mouth of one of his heroes:

“Who steals my purse, steals trash;  
But he who filches from me my good name,  
Robs me of that which not enriches him,  
And makes me poor indeed.”

Should you accuse a person of faults of which he is innocent, you must be sensible you are doing him the most flagrant injus-

tice. But there is another way in which you may be equally unjust, without perhaps considering yourselves so blamable : should you hear one accused when you know he is innocent, and forbear to clear his character when it is in your power, you are suffering him to be wronged in a most important interest, and are guilty of positive injustice. Further, if you suffer yourself to be prejudiced against another, and dwell on his faults without giving him credit for his good qualities, you are doing him secret injustice, even though you should never mention your opinion of him to the world.

There is a third claim which comes under the head of justice ; that is, our *feelings*. We are so constituted that much of our enjoyment depends on reciprocal kindness. Many times these kindnesses extend neither to character nor property. They may regard only the passing moment, yet they are of serious consequence. A pleasant look, a kind answer, a hundred little obliging actions, too minute to describe, but which we all know and feel the effect of, should fill every day. They add greatly to the happi-

ness of life, and he who withholds them is unjust to all around him.

A tart reply, a sneering look, or even a feigned indifference of manner, from a brother or sister, in certain circumstances, might wound the feelings more cruelly than severe bodily suffering. Let none of you imagine you are not of consequence enough to do all this mischief; for a person of the smallest capacity, even a child, has power sufficient to make others unhappy; and in a family particularly, the members are so linked together, that the conduct of one affects the whole; and remember, that when you thus misemploy your powers, you are robbing others of the tranquillity which they might have enjoyed, and thereby violating the law of justice.

I would just observe, that the conduct of children to parents is of still more pressing importance than that of brothers and sisters to each other. As they have the first claim to your dutiful attentions, a neglect of these attentions would be infringing on one of the most imperious rules of justice. Let me entreat you, my children, to consider what a

happiness it would be to society if only this one law were strictly observed. And then reflect, that if the practice of one virtue would produce such extensive benefit, what would be the felicity of individuals, of families, of the world, were all the amiable tempers of the Christian religion felt, and all its excellent precepts universally practised.

## XI.

## MERCY.

“Give me at length an angel’s tongue,  
That heaven may echo with my song ;  
The theme, too great for time, shall be  
The joy of long eternity.”

To love whatever is excellent in the human character is both a duty and a pleasure. When we see a person good and amiable, we cannot withhold our approbation and—unless we are lost to all perception of moral beauty—our affection. This is right, but still it is not mercy. If you behold a man oppressed with sickness and poverty, his body racked with pain, and his children crying for bread, your tender sympathies are awakened, you feel for his sufferings, and are anxious to relieve them ; this is a sweet effect of *compassion*, but still it is not mercy in its highest degree.

This heaven-born virtue will exercise tenderness to the faults as well as the miseries of a fellow-creature. In this sense mercy



outruns justice. Justice will not injure others; mercy will forgive others if they injure you. We will suppose an acquaintance has been guilty of some instance of misconduct which *you* have been always careful to avoid. If you are merciful, you will be so far from reproaching him with severity, that you will feel a disposition to make every kind allowance, and view every palliating circumstance; you will consider that he might have been more exposed by his situation to this particular sin than yourself; that perhaps his temptation was stronger; that he was off his guard, or that he might never have been so much instructed in his duties, or so well informed of the nature of wickedness and its awful consequences, as you have been. If he appears penitent, you will pity him, and do all in your power to console him; if he is not penitent, you will pity him still more, and feel grieved that his heart is so hard. But further, we will suppose him your enemy—that he has endeavored to hurt your interest, to injure your character; in short, done all in his power to ruin you. If you are merciful,



you will not retaliate, or even feel resentment; you will look upon him as diseased; will consider that his *soul* is sick, and with a malady far more alarming than any that could assail the body, and try to heal him; you will endeavor to overcome his hatred with love, do him every kind office in your power, aim at his restoration to virtue, and convince him that you are actuated by a higher principle than revenge. You will use every exertion to enlighten his mind with the splendor of truth, and raise him to the dignified eminence of virtue.

You may perhaps think you are so young that you can do nothing towards promoting the morality of your fellow-creatures; but you are greatly mistaken. Young people imitate young people. Their manners and opinions have great influence on each other. A young man of good natural understanding and a tolerable share of information may lead his companions almost where he pleases, unless they are uncommonly firm. You may often see this verified when vice is the object. How often have we known young persons ruined by keeping bad company; and for

this reason how anxiously do reflecting parents warn their children of this evil.

You might indeed reply, that wicked habits are more easily learned than good, and that I have told you the enemy of souls is strong. All this I will allow; but the Being who commands your obedience is infinitely stronger than all your enemies, and will assist you in every virtuous exertion, if you apply to him in humble sincerity.

You may ask what I think *you* could do towards reforming your companions. I answer, a great deal. If they see you strictly honest and fair in all your dealings, faithful to every trust, that nothing could provoke you to profanity, nothing tempt you to utter a falsehood, gentle and obliging in your deportment, conscientiously dutiful to your parents, affectionate and attentive to your family and friends, forgiving and kind to your enemies, and hear you frequently recommending these practices with meekness and humility, do you not think it would have an effect?

The last and most important consideration that I would name as an inducement to the love and practice of mercy is, that it makes

us resemble God. It is said to be his darling attribute, that in which he most delights. And I think we have no reason to doubt it when we reflect that the blessings of life and health, of light and air, of food in all its rich variety, all the conveniences of clothing, of habitations, all the beauties of nature, the comforts of families, and the advantages of society, are bestowed upon *sinner*s; and that, when we had abused them all and forfeited them all by the most ungrateful disobedience to every command of our benefactor, so great was his mercy that, rather than we should perish as we deserved, he sent his only Son from his bosom to fulfil the law which we had broken, to suffer its agonizing penalty in our stead, and close the scene of terror by a bitter and shameful death, that we might be forgiven and restored to his everlasting love. This Saviour, beyond all conception gracious, before he returned to his kingdom from this theatre of suffering, left this most benign injunction: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

His mercy like a river flows  
In one perpetual stream.

## XII.

## HUMILITY.

“The saint that wears heaven’s brightest crown  
In deepest adoration bends ;  
The weight of glory bows him down  
Then most when most his soul ascends :  
Nearest the throne itself must be  
The footstool of humility.’

PERHAPS there is no sin more offensive to God, or more offensive to men, when seen in each other, than pride. If it is discovered in a mean man, it renders him still more contemptible. If in one who possesses good qualities, it tarnishes their beauty. For let a man have ever so many valuable acquirements, if we see him proud of them, we feel such an involuntary dislike that we can hardly give him credit for the good that really belongs to him. And so strongly does our nature revolt at assumption in a fellow-creature, that we can more readily forgive real injuries than a single look of scorn.

Perhaps the observation was not unjust, that "pride has in it the guilt of lying and stealing:" of stealing, because it arrogates to itself a gift which belongs to God; of lying, because it denies that he is the giver. Let us inquire what reasons we have for entertaining this odious vice. We were made of the dust, and are returning to it again. We came into the world destitute of food and clothing, and without the least power to obtain either, and must have starved and perished if our lives had depended on any exertions of our own. Can you discern in this any cause for pride?

Have you beauty? You did not give it to yourself, any more than the butterfly created its painted wings; neither can you hold it by your own power a moment. A short fit of sickness may destroy it, or death put an end to it in an instant. Can it then be a cause for pride?

Have you a fine understanding and great natural talents? Then you are highly responsible for the use of them. They are given that you might honor your Creator in a more eminent manner, be more extensively



useful to your fellow-creatures, and improve your own heart in piety and virtue in a higher degree than the generality of mankind. And if you neglect this improvement, you deserve the punishment threatened to the slothful servant: "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required;" and, "He that knoweth his Lord's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." Are talents then a cause for pride?

Have you wealth? If dishonestly obtained, it will afford you no substantial peace while you possess it, and at the end will rankle upon your heart like the poison of a serpent. If gained lawfully, you are accountable to God for the manner in which you spend it. After securing for yourself what the law of justice allows, you are required to use the remainder for the benefit of others. And if you fail in doing this, you are liable to the punishment of an unfaithful steward, and you had better have lived in poverty all your days. Are riches then a cause of pride?

If you are dependent on the power and will of God not only for your life and health, but for the form of your bodies, the capaci-

ties of your minds, and that proportion of the good things of the world which you enjoy; if too you are strictly accountable to him for the use of them all, and added to this, if you consider you have abused them all, of what have you to boast? Is not pride the most unreasonable feeling that can enter the breast of man?

Humility is its entire reverse. The humble man looks up to his Maker with grateful dependence. He feels thankful that he was not made a clod of the valley nor a beast of the field; that life is given him to enjoy, and reason to teach him how to enjoy it. He knows that he has sinned, but he is grieved at the remembrance, and it is his earnest desire to sin no more. He believes that God so loved him that He sent his Son into the world to sustain the punishment that he deserved, and the thought lays his spirit in the dust. He is sensible that all his powers of body and mind are the gifts of his Creator, and he longs to employ them all in his service. When he has done the best action in his power, he is ashamed it is no better, because he knows a perfect God requires a per-



fect service, and he sensibly feels that his services are all imperfect. But he humbly trusts that his merciful Father will forgive his failures, and graciously accept his sincere though weak endeavors to please Him for the sake of his blessed Saviour.

He looks abroad upon his fellow-creatures, and views them as one great family under the same universal Parent. When he sees them rebellious, he is grieved at their ingratitude. When he beholds them obedient, he rejoices. If he has any advantages of mind or body or worldly interest over others, he diligently endeavors to employ them for their benefit. He envies none above him; he looks with scorn on none beneath him. He knows that the same almighty Being fashioned them all, and divided to each his gifts as he saw fit, and he rests fully satisfied with the division. He is careful to let no opportunity slip of doing good to his fellow-beings; if he cannot render them a great service, he will attempt a smaller. He believes that his Master will approve or reject his actions, not according to their apparent magnitude, but the feeling that accompanies and the motive that directs

them. This feeling he always desires should be humble love, and this motive the glory of his Creator. Should you inquire whether a state like this can be attained by mere human effort, I answer, No. Fallen as we are from our original purity, no holy feeling can be exercised, no holy action performed without divine grace.

Here then comes in the glory and beauty of the gospel plan. When we were "dead in sins," the Son of God undertook our restoration. In our nature he fulfilled the law which we had broken, sustained the penalty due to our transgressions, and by his infinitely meritorious righteousness purchased the pardon of sin and everlasting life for all who believe in him. And he now sends his Spirit into the hearts of men, to convince them of guilt, to convert them to himself, to enlighten, sanctify, and comfort them, to qualify them for the enjoyment of a state of perfection and endless blessedness in the world to come, and enable them, while he continues them in this world, to perform all the duties of the Christian life: to "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God."

## XIII.

## GRATITUDE.

PERHAPS there is no one duty more acknowledged in *words* and neglected in *practice* than gratitude. Not only the openly vicious, who abuse the kindness of their heavenly Benefactor by profaneness, intemperance, Sabbath-breaking, and every iniquity, but those who allow in themselves murmuring, fretfulness, and discontent, betray the black ingratitude of the human heart. To assist in forming just views of our deficiency in this most important duty, let us inquire what we were, what we are, and what we hope to be.

We are informed that man was made of the "dust of the ground." You were then once no better than a lump of clay, and must for ever have remained incapable of thought or enjoyment, had not the Almighty voice called you into life. The power who created

all things might, if he had seen fit, as easily have made you reptiles as what you are. You might now have been crawling worms, instead of human beings erect in stature and endued with the powers of reflection and rational enjoyment; and had not goodness as well as power been exerted in your behalf, even this existence, exalted as it is, might have been miserable; "every sound might have been grating, every scent nauseous, every sight shocking, every touch painful;" and when compelled to eat by the cravings of hunger, every thing you tasted might have been disgusting. Or, had you been deficient in any of your senses or limbs, how greatly would your enjoyment have been lessened. But among the many millions who inhabit the earth at once, instances of personal deformity are rarely seen; it seems as if divine Providence had scattered just enough of them over the world to awaken the rest to a sense of the invaluable privilege of a perfect form. Intense have been the labors of the curious for ages in developing the mysterious organization and texture of the human fabric; but notwithstanding all the researches that have

been made, much still remains undiscovered.

Yet the wonderful structure of our bodies, and the abundant variety which nature has furnished for their support and delight, form but an inferior grade in our scale of obligations. We are informed that man was made in the "image of God," that we are the honored temples of that Spirit who fills immensity, and that when He who created the world descended from his throne of glory, he assumed the human form. To what dignity have these astonishing condescensions of Deity exalted our nature. But when we turn our eyes within, when we attempt a survey of the treasures of the immortal mind, what wonders rush upon our view: *Fancy*, which disjoins, transposes, or creates at pleasure; which dresses the world in smiles or shrouds it in mourning as she lists; *Imagination*, which mounts beyond the stars, and pierces through the veil of worlds unseen; *Reason*, which examines, compares, corrects, decides; *Affections*, which can embrace the brotherhood of man, and rise to man's Creator; *Will*, which commands every power to

its standard, and subjugates the whole to its empire; add to these a capability of happiness, pure, sublime, and lasting as eternity.

Let your bosoms glow with thankfulness for the bounties of your God, and begin now the song of praise that shall sound through the conclave of heaven to a blissful eternity.



## XIV.

## UNBELIEF.

PERHAPS there is no one sin so offensive to God and ruinous to man as unbelief. It is a stagnant and fetid pool, from which issues a fog of pestilential vapors that disorder the soul and deform the life. Or, to shift the metaphor, it is a most powerful engine of our subtle adversary to undermine the happiness of man. Could mortals once be convinced of their immortality; could they be firmly persuaded that this life is only a passage to another; could they believe that for every word, thought, and action they must render a strict account before the bar of a Judge whom neither prejudice could warp nor hypocrisy deceive; could they realize that a blissful or miserable eternity hung on their present choice, what a wonderful difference should we see in the conduct of the world.

Truth assails us on all sides. The earth is



full of witnesses. Every object we behold is a strong evidence, every passing moment has a voice. Our lives are supported by an energy not our own; our bodies are sustained with an aliment which we must starve before we could produce, and clothed with materials which we must freeze before we could create; yet how seldom do we acknowledge or even see the hand which supplies them.

That there is a Being on whom we are dependent for our life and all its enjoyments, is evident from the light of nature. "The invisible things of Him," says the apostle, "from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." It would seem as if this belief was required even of heathen who knew not the gospel. But when the light of revelation has burst upon our sight; when it has discovered this almighty Creator as our Father and our Friend; when it has given us a code of laws so wise, so perfect, that the observance of them would fill the earth with happiness; when it has discovered our deep depravity in their viola-

tion, the opposition of our hearts to all that is good, and the heavy condemnation which must inevitably follow such black apostasy—death demolishing the human structure, and eternal despair awaiting the never-dying soul; when it has further unfolded a system of recovery, of redemption, which fills all heaven with amazement and rapture; when it reveals salvation for the most abandoned sinners, purchased with blood, blood which was of more value than all worlds, and freely offered to wash away the guilt of man; when all this has been fully disclosed, what language can paint the enormity of unbelief.

The continual changeableness of man in his pursuit of earthly good is a constant evidence of its unsatisfactory nature: he amasses wealth, he multiplies luxuries, he varies amusements, he removes from city to city, from nation to nation; he traverses the earth, he crosses the ocean in search of happiness, and each empty object invariably exclaims, "It is not in me!" Disappointment strikes a damp on his heart, but it does not open his eyes; all nature addresses him with invitations to seek its beneficent Author, but

he is like the deaf adder ; a starry crown is held over his head, but he will not behold it, for he is gathering sticks and stones to build him a snug nest, which will not shelter him from the coming storm.

When mercies fail of their effect, judgments are sent : war, famine, pestilence stride through the world and lay the nations low, earthquakes shake the foundations on which we rest, and hurricanes rend the air with awful desolation. Witness that tremendous scene which so lately appalled us, and whose wide destructions are yet dreadfully visible. Where was then our refuge ; what our hope ? Could *men* avert the fury of that element ? Could the works of men withstand its force ? Ah, at that moment we sensibly felt our impotence and our dependence. Had the Hand which restrained the tempest unbridled its power, had the Being who commanded it to peace redoubled its strength, what would have been our forests, our villages, our cities, in one short hour, but a frightful, promiscuous heap of ruins ?

And now, my children, ask your conscience whether you would feel safe to die

in your present state ; and if the answer is unsatisfactory, hesitate no longer, but cast yourselves this moment into the arms of that Saviour who alone can secure you from endless misery, and conduct you to unspeakable, inconceivable, never-ending blessedness.

## XV.

## THE SABBATH.

ONE day's rest in seven is a wise and gracious ordination of our God. Were we obliged to labor incessantly for our bread, without this favorable intermission, our bodies would fail with fatigue and our souls sink with discouragement; but the regular return of this precious season rests our tired limbs and recruits our wearied spirits.

Yet let us remember, it was not given to be spent in sloth or dissipation. Our all-wise Creator never intended it should be wasted in stupid inactivity or sacrificed to vain amusements. It is to be *employed*. But its employments are calculated to soften our cares, exalt our affections, and cheer our hearts.

Let us imagine the father of a family, possessed of an immense property, which he means in due time to distribute among his children. Let us suppose him placing them

all at different schools suited to their rank and fortune; yet in order to prevent the forgetfulness which absence might occasion, and to cherish the sentiments of filial love, inviting them to return home and spend one day in the week with him, as a day of relaxation from their studies, a day of feasting and family enjoyment. We will suppose one of the sons refuses this invitation. He has taken to low company; and when the rest of his family are assembled with gladness, enjoying each other's society and the conversation and smiles of their delighted father, he skulks away with his filthy companions, to pass the day in a manner that degrades himself and disgraces his connections. His brothers endeavor to dissuade him from practices so vile, and mention their fears that, although their father had as yet borne with him patiently, in the hope that he would return to his duty, yet if he continued disobedient, he would be discouraged, and cut him off from all share in his property. He answers, he will venture it; he shall not be *driven* to duty; he will spend his time as he pleases. Would you not think such a conduct the very height of



ingratitude and stupidity? Yet far more stupid and more ungrateful is every one who lives under the light of the gospel, and turns aside on the Sabbath from the service of God.

Nothing could have been better calculated for such fallible, forgetful creatures as we, than the institution of public worship: to hear our duty from the unerring word, have it pressed upon us by the friendly exhortation, join in social prayer for grace to perform it, and unite in the glad song of praise to our common Benefactor.

Yet I am far from meaning that our devotions should be confined to the sanctuary. Religion is not one thing, and business another. Religion is to *direct* our business. The exercises of the Sabbath are to prepare us to discharge the duties of the week. If we misspend this day, we have no assurance that a blessing will accompany the rest. If the Sabbath, under the Jewish economy, was welcomed as a season of devout contemplation and sacred delight, in celebrating the wonders of creating power and love, with what feelings ought *we* to meet it, as commemorating that new and glorious creation



which was “brought to light by the gospel :” the triumphant resurrection of that Saviour who on this day burst the bars of death, and opened the gates of immortal blessedness to a ruined world.

Let it be kept as a holy jubilee, as a day of gladness and thankful praise. Let gratitude to God be evinced by love to men. Hushed be every discordant feeling; banished every dark, malignant passion to its native shades. Let us cherish every sentiment of social affection, study every means to mitigate the sufferings and increase the enjoyments of our fellow-beings; cheerfully perform every kind office of charity; call into lively exercise the gentle virtues of patience, forbearance, forgiveness, humility; search with believing attention the Scriptures of truth; keep all the ordinances of our God, and thus evince our interest in that blessed Redeemer whose triumphs over death, hell, and sin we this day celebrate. “If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday.” “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing

thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable ; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words ; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord ; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

"In holy duties let the day,  
In holy pleasures, pass away.  
How sweet a Sabbath thus to spend,  
In hope of one that ne'er shall end."

## XVI.

## TIME.

ALTHOUGH man is the only being to whom time is granted, perhaps there is no gift more unduly estimated or carelessly squandered. But however stupidly insensible we may be of its value, it is nevertheless an inestimable treasure. It is the nail on which our immortal interests hang. It is the season for planting that seed whose harvest is to be reaped in eternity. It is a conveyance which, if safely deposited, insures bliss in reversion. It is a check, if I may so speak, upon the bank of heaven, the sweet prelude to perfect harmony, the cheering dawn of everlasting day.

But though a rich and precious blessing, time is also a sacred and important trust—a trust which we are every way capable of improving, and for the improvement of which we are strictly accountable. Every moment is a gift which should be employed in the

service of the Giver ; and if it is not so employed, it is worse than wasted ; for it is robbing God of his right, and preparing a scourge which shall one day severely lash our consciences.

Another consideration which should quicken our diligence in duty is, that time is short. The work we have to do is immense ; the season to do it in, a span. The smallest portion of time is invaluable, especially when we consider the rewards of obedience ; for so bountiful a Paymaster is our God, that the most accurate arithmetician could not cast the interest of *one well-spent hour*. Again, it is not only short, but hastily passing away ; even while you grasp it, 't is gone ; the days and months and years that are past, are to us as though they had never been.

Let us also remember, that when once past it will not return. If property is lost, it may be regained ; if even health is destroyed, it may be restored ; but when *time* is gone, it is gone for ever. The hours which have been wasted at the shrine of vanity, or sacrificed in the service of vice, though ever so deeply regretted, will never come back to afford us

another chance to improve them. They have already winged their way to the court of heaven, and borne a faithful report of the manner in which they have been employed.

We were made to glorify our Maker ; and if we refuse to answer the end of our creation, we have nothing to expect but the punishment due to rebels. Do not deceive yourselves with the idea that you are too young to do any thing for the honor of your Creator. Every human being who is capable of moral action is capable of living to His honor. Were none accepted but those who perform deeds that the world calls great, not one in a million would be saved. The bulk of mankind have not opportunities to perform great actions ; but we are rewarded according to our improvement of the opportunities that are given. The hero who subdues the enemy of his country has done well ; but he who, from a principle of obedience, conquers a turbulent or fretful temper, has done as well, and perhaps better. The hero may have fought to obtain renown ; but the Christian has opposed sin to please God.

Perhaps you may think, that if you could

establish a seminary of learning that would instruct thousands, or form a plan of government which would prove a lasting benefit to your country, you would attempt it with alacrity; but be assured, if you forgive an enemy, if you return good for evil, if you suppress a passionate word which was rising to your tongue, if your heart melts with pity over the sufferings of a fellow-creature, and you do all in your power to relieve him, you are performing a service perhaps more pleasing to Him who sees your heart than if you had done a deed which gained the plaudits of an admiring world. That law whose observance secures the bliss of angels is also granted to man; and it is a law of love. It was the loss of this love that filled the world with misery, and introduced death among the human race; and it is the absence of this love that darkens the infernal regions with the clouds of despair.

To restore this love, with all its train of heavenly graces and refined enjoyments, to rebel man, the eternal Son of the eternal God forsook his glorious throne, performed a sorrowful pilgrimage in this world of woe, and



at length poured out his soul unto death. If then the salvation which was so dearly purchased is to be secured in this short space of existence, how diligently, how zealously, how watchfully ought we to improve the present moment. Let us realize that now is the "accepted time," now is the "day of salvation," and without delay comply with this merciful requisition: "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

"To-day the prize is won ;  
The promise is to save :  
Then Oh be wise ; to-morrow's sun  
May shine upon your grave."



## XVII.

## VIEW OF THE DIVINE HAND.

“Almighty power, and equal skill,  
Shine through the worlds abroad ;  
Our souls with vast amazement fill,  
And speak the builder God.”

THERE are three methods in which the divine Being makes himself known to his creatures: namely, by the works of nature, the dispensations of providence, and the word of grace. And although there are few in a Christian land who deny that God is the author of nature and of the Scriptures, yet the dealings of his hand in the common occurrences of life are too little regarded even by Christians.

There are some who are willing to own the *general* government of the Creator, but object to his particular providence; that is, they acknowledge that he overrules and directs great things, such as the revolutions of seasons, the changes of day and night, and the rise and fall of empires, but not the small circumstan-

ces which mostly fill up the life of every man. This appears to me just as absurd as to say that God made the world, but not every little insect and spire of grass; for the question naturally arises, Who then did make them? And as the changes which are ever taking place in human life are as much beyond every one's power as the revolutions of seasons, the same question may be urged with equal propriety, "If God does not order them, who does?"

To creatures like us, too blind to foresee and too impotent to control the smallest event, it is an unspeakable consolation that the Being who is possessed of boundless power and infinite wisdom and goodness will vouchsafe to superintend the concerns of our lives. It is a most unworthy apprehension of the omnipotent and omniscient God, that any object can be too minute for his inspection, or too distant for his power to reach. What within the compass of immensity can escape His eye who fills heaven and earth?

But if we trace this infidelity to its source, I believe we shall find its origin in guilt. The creature unreconciled to God is unwill-

ing to have all his actions, and even his secret thoughts and intentions, scrutinized by a Being of infinite perfection. Conscious of sin, he shrinks from the view of a purity which he feels must condemn him, and he chooses rather to throw off the restraints of reason, and persuade himself to believe an absurdity, than subject himself to a yoke which galls him. But the life of such a man is without rest and without hope; for the sins of his heart, the sorrows of his state, and the wants of his nature he has no resource.

Let the providence and mercy of God be out of sight, and little but wretchedness is left for the children of men. But how different are the feelings of the true believer. He too has his sins, his wants, and his sorrows; but he pours his sorrows into the bosom of a Friend who he knows will relieve them; he spreads his wants before the eye of a Father who he trusts will supply them; and he lays his sins at the feet of the only Being in the universe who can forgive them. "Seek, and ye shall find," is a command and a promise; let us see to it that we do our part, and God will not fail in doing his. His benediction

will sweeten every cup of sorrow, till we shall finally look back upon the wondrous methods of Providence from the beatific heights of immortality, with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

"Assisted by His grace,  
We still pursue our way,  
And hope at last to reach the prize,  
Secure in endless day."

## XVIII.

## THE FALL AND RECOVERY OF MAN.

As far as we are capable of judging, there must have been a period when no being existed but the eternal God; when there was not a star to sparkle in the firmament of heaven, nor an angel to hymn in concert with his brother angel a Creator's praise. Millions and millions of ages before the sun lighted up his fires, or a planet rolled round the glorious orb, the Almighty "had existed from eternity." At his command, myriads of beings sprung into life and joy. This earth arose in all its beauty, peopled with innumerable inhabitants of every size, from the huge elephant that stalks in the forest to the puny nations which inhabit the leaf or sport in a drop of water.

Man at length was created in the image of his Maker, perfect in beauty, perfect in soul, possessed of every intellectual endowment to render him wise and good and happy. The

earth was given into his hand. Every "beast of the field and every fowl of the air" the Lord God "brought unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." Of all the vast variety of delicious fruits which grew in the garden of Eden, but *one* was prohibited; one was reserved to prove his obedience. Happy in himself, happy in his beloved wife, happy in the prospect of a numerous race of sons and daughters, who should by and by throng the flowery walks of paradise, repose in its fragrant, shady bowers, and join with him and Eve in making the air of Eden resound with songs of praise to Him "who maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice," and above all, enjoying the sweetest communion with a smiling God, is it not beyond measure astonishing that he should for a moment forget all his obligations, with the most daring presumption break through his only restriction, and eat the forbidden fruit? He turned away from God and from happiness. He plunged himself into guilt, and of course misery. He fell, and the hu-



man race fell with him. Alas, how soon was the aspect of things altered. What must have been the astonishment of our first parents, to behold those animals which were wont to gambol around them, sportive and gentle as the mountain lamb, changed to ferocious and deadly enemies, ready to hunt their lives. How alarmed at the first sensation of pain in bodies which had never experienced an uneasy sensation; and how terrified to know it was a prelude to death—death, which they had never seen, and never before dreaded. But all the natural evils which fell thick around them bore no comparison to their spiritual ruin. The image of God was withdrawn, *sin* had taken possession of their souls, and they were fit only to be cast away from their adorable Creator, and plunged into deserved destruction.

At this awful crisis the merciful Being who was afterwards nailed to Calvary's cross, and poured out his spotless soul in agony, appeared for the rescue of self-ruined man. "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." Here was love stronger than death. The promise of God was

now made to Adam, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Glorious promise! full of hope, full of consolation; a promise which has extended to this very moment, and shall be extended to the last being who shall be born upon earth.

Our first father rebelled against his God, and subjected himself to death. Every one of us have trod in his footsteps. Our divine Redeemer bore the punishment of our guilt, and rescued us from the power of the grave. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;" and how was all this accomplished? By leaving the heaven of heavens, where he had been supremely happy before all worlds were made, and descending to our earth to obey the laws of God; to suffer, to die in our stead.

As an infinite Being, he was capable of sustaining the punishment due to the sins of a world. I believe it utterly impossible for finite minds to comprehend the agonies which Jesus Christ endured for sinful man. Look at your past lives, recollect your thousand provocations of God and your aggravated wickedness, and then view it all laid upon

that dear and patient Sufferer who, when he had borne the full measure of vengeance due to all your guilt, and not till then, "bowed his head and gave up the ghost." Well might the devout poet exclaim,

"Sun, didst thou fly thy Maker's pain, or start  
At that enormous weight of human guilt  
Which bowed his blessed head, made groan the centre,  
Burst earth's marble womb—with pangs, strange pangs,  
Delivered of her Head? Hell howled—and heaven  
That hour let fall a tear : heaven wept,  
That man might smile—heaven bled,  
That man might never die."

By this great propitiation, innumerable blessings which sin had forfeited are restored. When duly impressed with this truth, with what humble thankfulness should we receive our mercies. When we sit down to our richly-laden tables, what would be our feelings if we recollected,

"There's not a gift his hand bestows,  
But cost his heart a groan?"

Should we be inclined to murmur, think you, if any desired luxury was wanting? Let us blush for our past ingratitude, and each one exclaim in the language of an ancient saint, "I am less than the least of all thy mercies."

Yet this world and all its variety of enjoyments, the possession of life and health, the benefits of air, food, clothing, the harmony of sounds, the beauty of prospects, the endearing intercourse of friends, and all the wonderful variety of pleasures contained in each of these blessings separately considered, are but a small, a very small part, of the bounty of Jehovah, of the purchase of our Redeemer. They are less than a drop to the fathomless ocean, when compared with the immense, the inconceivable, the ever-enduring, ever-increasing blessedness of the heavenly world.

Expand all your powers of thought, stretch your imagination to its utmost limits, rise on fancy's eagle-wing, and soar beyond the unseen suns which enlighten unknown worlds, and then conceive of a glorious creation as much excelling this in beauty as the orb of day outshines the glimmering taper; think of beings as much superior to men in loveliness and excellence as perfection is above depravity; then make one strong effort, exert all the ardor of your souls to lift a thought to Him who fills immensity, and reflect that, if

you become the servants of Jesus, that glorious world will be your blissful residence, those perfect beings your affectionate companions, and that Almighty God your everlasting Friend. But if you neglect this great salvation, if you trample on the blood of a dying Saviour, what inconceivable distress awaits you! Seek him now, my children; accept his mercy while it is yet offered, lest you hear at last these soul-rending words: "Depart from me, all ye that work iniquity."

"Come unto me," and tread the way,  
The only way to mortals given,  
That leads to an eternal day,  
That brings you to the promised heaven.

"Come unto me;" for you that strain  
In realms of light to God shall rise,  
In joy that, freed from sin and pain,  
Your spirit enters paradise.

"Come unto me;" for you in heaven  
Remains a pure, eternal day;  
The perfect rest to virtue given,  
The crown "that fadeth not away."

## XIX.

## FUTURE LIFE.

LIFE is so short, eternity so certain, and our conduct in the world of so much importance, that it cannot be impertinent to press upon your attention again and again a subject of all the most interesting to every human soul. Youth is so prone to look forward with ardor for enjoyments it will never possess—it is so apt to overrate expected good, and to pursue pleasures which exist but in anticipation, with an energy which ought to be directed only to the lasting concerns of a future life, that it needs “line upon line” and “precept upon precept” to check its impetuous career, and bring it back to the sober paths of virtue and religion. A future life should be continually kept in view, and all our efforts bent to secure the felicity of that state which is to endure *for ever*. For ever! what a vast idea does this word convey:



happy or miserable for ever! If the life to come were as transient as this—if it were even to last millions of ages, and then expire—the preparation for it would be of infinitely less consequence than it now is. Whose heart does not beat with delight at the prospect of *perfect happiness* which shall never have an end? What breast does not freeze with terror at the thought of *everlasting despair*? Let us climb the utmost heights of imagination, and stretch our view as far as thought can pierce over the immense, unfathomable gulf till the soul grows giddy at the prospect, still, still we have but entered the very confines of eternity. When all that we can conceive of duration has rolled away, the immeasurable *future* is yet to come.

And it comes; even now it hastens on the “wings of the wind” to crush us beneath the weight of unutterable woe, or to crown us with the garlands of immortal blessedness. Is it then of little consequence whether we are prepared to meet it with acclamations of joy, or groans of anguish? The prophecies of Scripture are fast fulfilling. The convulsions of nations and the rapid succession of

events are urging to a close all sublunary things. Ere long that trumpet will sound which shall awake the dead, and we shall be spectators of a scene far different from any we have ever yet witnessed. The myriads of beings who have existed and will exist, from Adam to the last infant of the human race, will be assembled together. The hollow earth will be unpeopled of her multitude of slumbering inhabitants, and the vast ocean will disgorge the millions who have been hid for ages in its gloomy caverns.

Before the bar of God this amazing course of beings will be summoned to be "judged, every man according to his works." Then shall this mighty fabric be enveloped in devouring fire. Where are now the wonders of art which astonished mankind? Where the pyramids, the statues, the magnificent buildings which have been the wonder of ages? Where are the populous and busy cities of Europe, Asia, and America? All crumbled together in one general wreck. Where are the fleets which guarded kingdoms and whitened the bosom of the deep? Alas, they feed the flame which enwraps the world. At this

tremendous moment, where shall the guilty fly? Fame, honor, riches are bubbles which have burst in air. Every earthly prop has fallen; there is no shelter, no refuge for the naked soul, but the all-protecting arms of a Redeemer. Thither indeed may the sinner flee who has made that Saviour his Friend. And this infinitely important transaction is to take place in *time*. Who then will dare delay? Who will venture to protract this most interesting preparation till to-morrow?

And what is this preparation, my children? It is not a tedious round of formal observance, of cruel penances, of empty ceremonies; no, it is the surrender of the affections, the acquiescence of the will. Not the forced subjection of terrified slaves, but the cheerful obedience of thankful children. Is it wise to refuse a service so reasonable and so pleasant; especially when we consider that the benign Being who has graciously said, "My son, give me thy heart," has not hesitated to grant us the most unequivocal proofs of his love to us, not only in the blessings of this life, which are not shed in drops, but

poured in showers upon us ; but in the sacrifice of his precious Son, the darling of his soul, to save us from perdition ?

“How may we meet our conflict yet,  
In the dark and narrow way ?  
How, but through Him that path who trod ?  
Save, or we perish, Son of God.”

## XX.

## FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

It is doubtless a fact that death does not change the heart, it only fixes man in the state in which it finds him : a most awful and solemn thought. What being is so sunk in depravity, so wedded to vice, as to feel willing to be vicious to all eternity. Who that has ever experienced the stings of envy, hatred, or rage, could bear the idea of being scourged by these tormenting passions for ever. Yet this must inevitably be the state of every soul from whom the light and love of God are finally withdrawn. The mind cannot conceive, much less pen describe, the horror and despair of such a state ; nor would we indulge so painful a meditation, but from the hope that it may be profitable. Let us a moment then dwell on this scene of woe

while yet there is a possibility of escape. A celebrated English poet has these remarkable words :

“Dark demons I discharge, and hydra stings ;  
The keen vibration of bright truth is hell,  
When truth resisted long is sworn our foe,  
And calls eternity to do her right.”

Among the evils which we suffer in this world, none are so insupportable as those which we feel we have brought upon ourselves by our own misconduct. What then must be the anguish of a lost soul from the reflection that the misery he suffers might, by a timely attention, have been avoided. A recollection of the blessings he has abused, and which are now departed, the warnings he has disregarded, the voice of conscience he has stifled, the opportunities of recovery which he has neglected, and which have for ever gone by, the invitations of mercy which he has rejected, and which will be repeated no more, must add bitterness to his despair. If, added to all this, he should have the dreadful consciousness of having been the means of bringing others into the same state of suffering, and perhaps those whom he once loved,



the anguish of his reflections must be altogether inconceivable.

How should this thought awaken us to the most cautious watchfulness of our words and actions among those who may be influenced by our opinion or example. But let not your high responsibility, nor the important consequences of your conduct, discourage you from the performance of your duties. Let it rather stimulate you to the utmost diligence and attention in this performance; for though a course of incorrigible wickedness will surely be punished, yet every sincere effort to serve God will as certainly be accepted and rewarded. What, *every* effort? Yes, my children; every—the smallest act of obedience done for the glory of your Creator will not be forgotten; for has not our Saviour assured us that if any one gives a “cup of cold water” for his sake, “he shall in no wise lose his reward?” If this apparently little act of obedience shall be noticed and rewarded, what an immensity of happiness must follow a whole life filled with active usefulness.

Oh, could I recall the years I have carelessly spent, methinks every moment should

be employed in some new duty done for God. With me that wish is vain. But with you, the firm resolve to dedicate yourselves to the service of your Maker, would be the beginning of immeasurable happiness. Do you see it an arduous task? Do you feel yourselves unequal to the work? Let me then direct you—rather, let the word of truth direct you: “Search the Scriptures;” pray for assistance. “If any of you lack wisdom,” says the divine oracle, “let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.” Begin with applying this merciful word, and let not a day pass without seeking for this heavenly wisdom.

I have, on a former evening, given you my thoughts on the duty of prayer. I hope you will remember them. Do you think you have no time to pray—that business has a prior claim? Oh, my children, prayer is your first business. Heaven is purchased by the blood of a suffering Saviour, who will bestow a spirit of love on every soul that seeks it, and this spirit will enable you to perform every duty acceptably.

He will give you power over all your sinful propensities, strengthen you to fight with your spiritual enemies, give you the victory, and then crown you as conquerors. Who would hesitate to enlist under such a Commander? Be entreated not to delay this all-important work. Youth is yours, but youth is fast passing away. Should you even be spared to the age of man, even threescore years and ten, upon a retrospective view, will "dwindle to a point." But few, very few arrive at that age. You may be cut off in early life; and should this be the case, how delightful would be the reflection that you had made sure of an eternal Friend.

The world has nothing in comparison with a state like this; its pleasures pall upon the sense, its wealth perishes in the using, its honors evaporate in air. But the treasures of eternity are exhaustless mines, for ever and for ever opening to view. They are unfathomable fountains, continually pouring forth streams of bliss, which water the whole paradise of God. The verdure of that land never fades, the trees never shed their leaves, the fruit withers not. The hungry appetite

may there be abundantly satisfied, the thirsty soul may drink its fill; the feast is spread by the hand of infinite love, and the invitation is to all. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

## XXI.

## THREE NATURES OF MAN.

MAN may be considered as a being composed of three distinct natures: corporeal, mental, and spiritual. The first he possesses in common with the beasts of the field; they enjoy like him the pleasure of hearing, seeing, smelling, and tasting; but this is the extent of their enjoyment.

The second, or intellectual nature, is the eminence which raises man above the brute creation. It is the power which reflects, compares, arranges, and associates. It is the power of *mind*, to which his inferior faculties are in subjection. By this he can dive into the secrets of nature, and explore the wonders of the universe. He can calculate the size, distance, and motion of the heavenly bodies, and examine the fibres of the minutest plant. He can penetrate the deep

recesses of the earth, and pluck the solid gold from its dark abode; level stately forests, and turn mighty rivers from their ancient course; plant populous cities in the lonely desert, and ride upon the ocean billows. He can look back on the first man who was created, and forward to the last who shall be born; cast an eye of retrospection on the world as it "rose in loveliness" from the depths of chaos, and contemplate its awful state in the final conflagration. Yet all this he can do without one spark of virtue. It is knowledge and power, but is neither good nor evil if unconnected with the soul.

This leads us to consider his third or spiritual nature, which takes him up where the others leave him; and immensely does it rise above his other natures in dignity and capacity of bliss. This is the nature which allies him to God, and to this both his other natures should be in subordination. The disappointment and regret which darken society and becloud the face of many, is in consequence of his woful mistake in fixing his attention upon objects on which his best nature cannot rest. He may crowd his head



with science and his coffers with gold, multiply his pleasures like the sand, and load with his name the wings of every wind, yet the poor soul will sicken and starve; and why? because she is immortal; she feels that she shall live for ever, and she cannot feed on dying joys; she is capable of a pure and permanent felicity, and she pants for bliss exalted as her nature, endless as her duration. The wise and beneficent Author of our existence has attached happiness only to virtue. In boundless goodness he has given us a susceptibility of those enjoyments in which he delights. His nature is love, and he has graciously ordained that in love alone we shall obtain blessedness. "God made man upright."

It would therefore seem that virtue is the soul's native element. But when we do violence to its nature by contracting its desires, limiting its pursuits, corrupting its affections, and subjecting its energies to the tyranny of our inferior powers, is it surprising that disappointment and wretchedness are the consequence? Yet all this has sin done; and hence the mass of evils which have been ac-

cumulating on the earth from the fall of Adam to the present sad hour.

But though wicked and miserable, we are not left hopeless. The benign gospel has provided and revealed a method by which the mighty ruin may be repaired, and degenerate man restored to a state of excellence and happiness even greater than that from which he fell. Here then is a standard under which every power of body and faculty of mind may enlist and find their proper employment. If benevolence is the motive and usefulness the object, we cannot be too active. Let arts and sciences be cultivated; let knowledge and wealth be increased; let every means be seized which our abilities can embrace to honor God by doing good to men. Let the base principle of self-aggrandizement be dismissed to the regions from whence it sprung. Let the scholar pursue his studies with the generous design of enriching the minds of his fellow-beings; the ingenious artificer exert his powers of invention for the benefit of society; the wise legislator use his utmost endeavors to establish "justice and judgment and equity;" and even

he who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow strive to obtain more than a supply for his own wants, "that he may have to give to him that needeth"—*this* would be the soul's proper stand; she would thus feel her true dignity. The struggles after happiness which had heretofore proved invariably abortive, would now become invariably successful.

When our designs accord with those of our Creator, they cannot but prosper. No action would be then unimportant, because it would aim at promoting the same blessed end, the glory of God and the good of men. No one may plead inability, for there is work fitted to every one's capacity. In building an edifice, the humble laborer who lays the lowest stone in its foundation does as real a service as he who rears its loftiest pillar. Let us then enter without delay this field of action. Let all selfish views be laid aside for ever, and the heart go forth "in the delightfulness of its desire to bless." If duty might seem hard, let us look at Him who left the heaven of heavens to suffer and die for sinners, and animated by that bright example, learn to

make sacrifices cheerfully. Let the shortness of the time in which we have to act stimulate us to the most vigorous exertions in its improvement, that when life shall close, the immortal soul may not complain that we have fed her with vanities, and ruined her for ever.

## XXII.

## RETROSPECTION.

ANOTHER year, my children, has rolled from the measure of your lives, and advanced you a year nearer to the world of spirits. Thousands in this short period have been summoned to that dread tribunal from which there is no appeal, to "give an account of the deeds done in the body," and some of your acquaintances among the number, who were, not long since, as gay and joyous as yourselves. Their earthly cares and hopes and projects of happiness are now at an end. The vanities that once allured them are forgotten; the pleasures which once appeared so inviting have lost their power to charm, and they have now no further interest in the things that once engaged their attention than as they improved them to the glory of God, or abused them to his dishonor. If they listened to the voice of instruction, if they obeyed the word of God, and attended to the

dictates of conscience, new scenes of bliss have opened to their view, a bliss which no human tongue can describe or heart conceive, and which will never, never have an end. When millions and millions of ages are gone by, their happiness will be still beginning. But if they shut their ears to the calls of wisdom, if they rejected the overtures of mercy, if they lived and died in wilful rebellion against their Creator and Redeemer, what can paint their misery? Would it not have been "better for them if they had never been born?" But whatever may be their state, their *exit* demands your improvement. While *they* are taken, *you* are spared. Surely it is the truest wisdom to employ the fleeting moments, which are in haste to be gone, in the service of the Giver, to take a retrospective view of your lives, and inquire how they have been spent, in order to awaken your diligence in improving what yet remains.

"'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,  
And ask them what report they bore to heaven,  
And how they might have borne more welcome news."

Look at the variety of mercies which have been granted you the past year: the preser-



vation of your lives, general health, a plentiful supply of the bounties of the divine Hand, comfortable and decent clothing, a pleasant habitation continued for your accommodation, while hundreds not far distant have been driven from their homes by the devastations of fire, and cast shelterless upon the world ; and above all, a blessed Bible to direct you in the way of eternal life, while many wretched heathen have never so much as heard of the God who made them.

And then consider what return you have made to your Father in heaven for blessings so multiplied, for kindness so unwearied. In the examination of your past lives you cannot remember all your actions, but you can remember the general course and design of them ; and upon serious recollection you can discover whether you have endeavored to be more obedient to God the last year than formerly ; whether you have broken off any sins that you once practised, kept any good resolutions which you once made, perhaps when your consciences accused you, and your minds were awakened to "consider your ways ;" whether you have tried to "do just-

ly," to "love mercy," and "to walk humbly," since I gave my ideas of these duties, or felt just as careless and indifferent as ever. Intentions to reform are not reformation; resolutions must be carried into effect, or they will avail nothing; and it is as easy to put them in practice to-day as at any future time; nay, it will in all probability be easier, for the continuation of evil habits will strengthen sinful propensities and weaken good resolutions. A sin long indulged is harder to be broken off than when it was first allowed; the longer you delay, the more difficult will be your task.

There are some sins which must be prevented by avoiding the occasion of them, or what a judicious writer calls the "temptations to temptation:" for instance, if you feel an uncharitable spirit which will sometimes incline you to speak evil of your fellow-creatures, you should refrain from the company of those who are fond of slander, and associate with persons who are cautious of blaming others, and then you will not be under so great temptation to indulge your natural inclination. Or, if you are inclined to intem-

perance, you should carefully avoid the company of those who drink, and by this means you may escape the commission of many a sin. But whatever be your prevailing sins, you should make it your business to discover, and when discovered, to overcome them, or you will never be happy even in this world. There can be no felicity for a rational being without rational conduct, and all conduct is irrational which opposes religion. That we may be all governed by this blessed religion in this world, and taste the inconceivable joys which are its sure and certain reward in the next, let us solemnly entreat of Him who is ever ready to help those who come to him.

“Our sins rise up in dread array,  
And fill our hearts with shame and fear ;  
Our trembling spirits melt away,  
But find no friend or helper near.

“Offences rise where'er I look,  
But I confess their guilt to thee :  
Blot my transgressions from thy book ;  
Wash me from all iniquity.”

## XXIII.

## RESIGNATION TO GOD'S WILL.

How sweet to be allowed to pray  
To God the holy One ;  
With filial love and trust to say,  
“O God, thy will be done.”

Oh teach my heart the blessed way  
To imitate thy Son ;  
Teach me, O God, in truth to pray,  
“Thy will, not mine, be done.”

WHERE a spirit of discontent prevails, every virtue languishes and every duty is partially performed. Love to God, humility, and gratitude are doubtless important duties; but how can we be grateful or humble when, instead of realizing that we have ten thousand blessings which we deserve not, we feel as if we had not so many as we ought to have; and how can we love a Being who we think deals so hardly with us? If we had a due sense of our unworthiness, of our forgetful-

ness of our Benefactor, our unmindfulness of his providences, our disobedience of his commands, our ingratitude for his mercies, our disbelief of his threatenings, our want of trust in his promises, and our various abuses of his favors, so far from murmuring, we should be astonished at his forbearance.

If his mercy was not commensurate with his power, we should not be suffered to repeat our provocations of the Majesty of heaven; our forfeited lives would have been yielded long ere now to the stroke of vengeance, and we should be lamenting our aggravated rebellions in the regions of darkness. A disposition to receive all the allotments of providence with tranquillity and cheerfulness is not more a duty than a pleasure; indeed a discontented spirit has more guilt in it than some well-meaning people are aware of; it is in effect calling in question the wisdom and goodness of God, and implies that if we had the government of things, matters would be better managed. This uneasy disposition not only discovers a want of confidence in our Maker, but gross ignorance of ourselves; for if we considered that we could not dis-

cern an inch before us, and therefore were utterly incapable of directing future events, we should not be quite so anxious to take the disposal of them out of his hand, who seeth the end from the beginning. If we credit the declarations of Scripture, we must believe that the Being who condescends to notice the fall of a sparrow, and to number the hairs of our head, will not disregard the minutest circumstance which may in any wise affect the happiness of his rational creatures. Nor can we doubt whether He who guides the planets and controls the seasons is capable of ordering with perfect fitness the events of our lives. Yet we seem unwilling to confide our interests to his disposal; and to have no distrust of our own *wisdom* in forming plans which we lament our want of *power* to execute, although we have been often convinced that the disappointment of our schemes has proved highly beneficial to us, and that sometimes when they have been permitted to succeed, we have realized the truth of the poet's assertion, that

“Our very wishes give us not our wish.”



As the wisdom of our Creator is evident from all his works, both of creation and providence, so is his goodness equally manifest in his dealings with all his creatures; nor can we doubt his kindness to man when we consider that he gave us this beautiful world, and stored it with such an abundance of materials for our support and comfort. Do we want sustenance? bread springs from the earth, and presents itself to our hand. Is this too simple? the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea are given us for meat. Do we wish for variety? vegetables of every description crowd the soil for our gratification. Must we have luxuries? fruits of delicious flavor are suspended from the trees, folded in the bushes, or clustered in the vine for our delight. Do we want clothing? the field resigns its covering, the lamb yields his fleece, and the silk-worm spins her delicate thread for our accommodation. Are we fond of music? the brook gurgles sweetly as it flows, the leaves murmur to the playful breeze, and the birds swell their little throats in harmony. Do we wish for the enjoyments of vision? we

have but to lift the eye, and the beauties of nature rush upon our sight from above, below, around, in overwhelming loveliness.

And are these all? Oh no; these are but a part, a very scanty part of the blessings which Almighty goodness has prepared for man. This world, charming as it is, is but a passage to a better. If the beneficent Being, in whose hands we are, has so bountifully provided for our comfort in the state that is passing away; if he has also reserved an inheritance blissful beyond all human conception for his obedient children; is it not the basest ingratitude to murmur at his dispensations, and the height of stupidity to form a wish for the least alteration in his allotments? Let us resolve henceforth to resign ourselves wholly to his guidance, from a full belief that all the evil which has deformed this world of beauty is in consequence of sin, and that every affliction and every disappointment is intended by him who knows our frame to purify our hearts, to recover us to that state from which we have fallen, and prepare us for the exalted society and refined enjoyments of the heavenly world. Let us

submit ourselves to his disposal with that entireness of resignation which is the strongest proof of loyalty to our rightful Sovereign, with the firm persuasion that, as he wills that we should be good and happy, so, that our wills should accord with his, is our truest interest, and will assuredly issue in our final salvation.

“O Lord, my God, do thou thy will ;  
I will lie still,  
I will not stir, lest I forsake thine arm,  
And break the charm  
Which lulls me, clinging to my Father's breast,  
In perfect rest.”

## XXIV.

## TRUST IN GOD.

“My soul trusteth in thee; yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge.” Psa. 57.

Though o'er the path the cloud I see,  
Trusting, I turn my eye to thee;  
And tread, unharmed, the wave-washed strand,  
Supported by thy guiding hand.

THE service due from the creature to the Creator is not a mere external attendance upon forms; it is not a ceremonious set of prayers, a hasty reading of the Scriptures, or abstaining from the commission of some particular vices; but it is a resignation of the heart; it is a principle which extends to every action, word, and thought. It influences the desires and feelings of the inmost soul. It includes reverence, love, gratitude, confidence. And if we have a right view of the character of God, we shall readily acknow-

ledge that he is infinitely worthy of all these delightful exercises of the heart in their highest degree.

When we lift our thoughts to that glorious Being whose word created, whose power upholds, and whose wisdom governs, not this system only, but all the systems in the universe—a universe of such illimitable extent, that a mighty world, when seen from our earth, appears like a twinkling speck ; when we consider that he has created myriads of beings for the sole purpose of bestowing happiness ; that he preserves and blesses all orders of existence, from the lofty angels who “ excel in strength,” to the minim family which inhabits the leaf, how can we withhold our reverential love. But when we take a nearer and more endearing view of our God ; when we consider him not only as the Creator of all worlds, but as *our* Creator ; and not only our Creator, but our *Father*, our *Friend*, and our *Redeemer* ; that when we had covered ourselves with crime, and destroyed our souls, he not only pitied, but *died* for us ; took our nature upon him, that he might be capable of suffering, and opened his spotless

breast to receive the deadly weapon which pointed at our guilty souls; that by his righteous life and bitter death he has purchased for us all temporal blessings here and thrones of bliss in heaven—what heart that is not impenetrable as adamant, but must bow to his yoke.

Another sentiment which I mentioned as contained in piety, is confidence; in this we are all greatly deficient. And perhaps the want of no one religious principle more betrays our ignorance of the character of our God. We lean on the world, though it has always disappointed us; we depend on our hearts, though they have deceived us times innumerable; but we are afraid to trust in that Being who has never failed us. How many times has he preserved us when our lives have been in imminent danger; how often healed our sickness, relieved the pains of our bodies, and calmed the anxieties of our minds; how constantly supplied our wants, and how patiently borne with our aggravated rebellions. Oh, had we our deserts for our black ingratitude to such a Benefactor, our lives, instead of being sometimes



clouded with transient sorrow, would be constantly overwhelmed with the deepest gloom; instead of meeting light crosses in our path, we should be crushed under the weight of immovable vengeance.

By confidence in God I do not mean a willingness to leave the concerns of futurity to his direction, because we have little or no belief in their reality; neither do I mean that desponding resignation of soul which looks upon its Maker as an arbitrary Being whom no human endeavors can please, and who distributes happiness and misery without any regard to the feelings or exertions of his creatures; but I mean a sincere and cheerful giving up of ourselves and all our interests into his hands, with a firm persuasion that he will dispose of us in the very best possible manner: I mean a resting ourselves upon his providence as an infant lies in the lap of its mother, with that same feeling of security and unapprehensiveness of danger: I mean a belief in his wisdom, goodness, and power united; a wisdom which always discerns what is best, a goodness which always chooses it, and a power which is every

way able to accomplish it ; to all which add the sweet attribute of mercy which compassionates our fallen state, and is desirous to remove the miseries which we have brought upon ourselves.

With this belief engraven on our hearts, our fears would all vanish. We should receive every gift of his hand with thankfulness, and endeavor to improve it in that manner which we thought would be most pleasing to him. If we were under crosses and afflictions, we should bear them with entire submission to his will, from a full persuasion that he would not have sent them had they not been absolutely necessary, that he was taking the best of methods for our good, and that he would remove them as soon as the kind purpose was answered. With this belief we should tread every step of our checkered way cheerily ; the roughness of its acclivities would render the level paths more pleasant. And when at length, wearied with fatigue, we longed for rest, with what dilatation of heart should we anticipate our blissful seat on the banks of living green which inclose the “pure river of the water of

life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

Earnestly let us endeavor to obtain, to cultivate, to cherish a trust in God; it will give wings to our obedience and comfort to our hearts. It will fill our lives with usefulness, and illumine the dark valley of death with hope.

"Though destruction walk around us,  
Though the arrows past us fly,  
Angel guards from Thee surround us;  
We are safe, if Thou art nigh.

• "Should swift death this night o'ertake us,  
And command us to the tomb,  
May the morn in heaven awake us,  
Clad in bright, eternal bloom."

## XXV.

## DIVINE GOODNESS.

THE goodness of God is a theme which fills the breasts of angels with delight; and if we are ever admitted to dwell with angels, it will be to us a source of joy and increasing praise through the ages of eternity.

The various capacities of enjoyment with which our Creator has endued us are constant witnesses of his beneficence. The senses of our bodies, as well as the faculties of our souls, are formed to receive delight. Why was the eye framed, but to refresh us with views of the grand and beautiful objects of nature and the endearing sight of "the human face divine?" Why the ear, but to charm us with the melody of sweet sounds, and especially the cheering voice of friendship and love? Why the palate, with such

nice sensibility, but to afford us enjoyment in the wonderful variety of relish by which our food is distinguished? And why the very organ of our breath, endued with the fine perception of grateful odors and reviving air, but to increase our pleasures?

The kindest father on earth could not have devised so many sources of gratification for his beloved children as those with which our heavenly Parent has indulged his offspring. How thankfully have Christians contemplated his protecting care, not only through the dangers of the day, but when sunk in the slumbers of night, in a state totally defenceless. How all nature is regulated for our security in the hours of repose. The glaring light of the sun withdrawn, every discordant sound hushed, and stillness commanded to reign; only the pale stars and mild moon are awake, to shed their soft influence on the hours of peace. In the morning we arise to behold as it were the beauties of a new creation. The sun mounts his splendid chariot, to light us in our way and cheer us with his smiles. The birds fill the air with harmony, the flowers breathe their choicest sweets, and

every breeze wafts health and vigor and joy. Through the day we are preserved from ten thousand accidents which might maim our limbs or stop the springs of life. Our food is provided in all its rich abundance, and generally even before our nature anxiously demands it; as if we must not even suffer the pains of delay. Yet do the pleasures of sense form but a small proportion of our blessings. The society of friends and the sweet reciprocation of affection are precious sources of enjoyment. We cannot count the mercies of God; "they are more than can be numbered."

But how does our list of obligations rise and swell upon us, when we take into view the abundance, the worth, and the duration of spiritual gifts. A Bible put into our hands as a chart for eternal life—a life that is as much superior to this as the glorious orb of day is brighter than a glow-worm—this is a treasure of more value than worlds. Why? Because it proclaims pardon of sin and the everlasting love of a reconciled God. Because it shows us our duties, and gives us motives to practise them; invites us to com-



bat our enemies, and assures us of success ; lights us through the path of life, supports us in death, and introduces us with loud hallelujahs to the mansions of heaven.

Amid such a profusion of blessings and such obligations to obedience, is it not astonishing that any one is willing to be ungrateful and rebellious? Yet such is man! Prone "to evil as the sparks fly upward," while he revels on the bounty of his Maker, he forgets the hand that feeds him, and flies in the face of commands every way calculated to make him good and happy. But the laws of heaven are not to be trampled upon with impunity. God is merciful, but he is also just; and he who will not bend beneath a weight of blessings, must be crushed under the pressure of ill-desert.

We have been contemplating a *smiling* Providence; but we must remember that He who arrays the sun in splendor, also "clothes the heavens with blackness;" and though the "hard and impenitent heart" may, in the day of prosperity, treat with levity eternal things, yet who has the temerity to meet the frowns of Deity without dismay? And if now, in the

day of grace, when anger mixed with forbearing love tenderly touches the rod of correction, we shrink with terror, how shall we endure when justice without mercy lifts its dreadful hand? If our fears “gather paleness” at a flash of lightning, at a peal of thunder—if our knees smite together at the sound of a “rushing, mighty wind”—what will be our consternation when that tempest begins its roar which is destined to destroy the world? when that fire is kindled which shall not be quenched till the earth is burned up? This tremendous day will surely come; it is even now hastening on us as fast as time can move. If to shut our eyes or stop our ears would retard its progress or avert destruction, we might have some color of excuse for indifference; but the operations of God wait not for man. In this case, a sense of danger may be the first step to safety; it is enough that we are warned to flee from the approaching ruin, to “turn to the stronghold.” Let us listen to the admonition, and obey the invitation; then shall the gathering clouds which threaten to burst with fury on our heads be dissolved into showers of bless-

ings. Let us yield our hearts to the influence of the Divine Spirit, and our bosoms will be filled with peace, our lips with praise, and our lives with usefulness. Under his benignant tuition we shall "revive as the corn and grow as the vine." Our souls, no longer like a barren wilderness, dead to goodness and insensible to love, will flourish in every virtue; each noxious weed shall be finally eradicated, and "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

"Thou who createdst all; thou Fountain  
Of our sun's light, who dwellest far  
From man, beyond the furthest star,  
Yet ever present; who dost heed  
Our spirits in their utmost need;  
We bless thee, Father, that we *are*.

"We bless thee for our inward life;  
For its immortal date decreeing;  
For that which comprehendeth thee,  
A spark of the divinity  
Which is the being of our being.

"We bless thee for this bounteous earth;  
For its increase, for corn and wine,  
For forest oaks, for mountain rills,  
For cattle on a thousand hills,  
We bless thee; for all good is thine.

“The earth is thine ; the summer earth,  
Fresh with the dews, with sunshine bright,  
With golden clouds in evening hours,  
With singing birds and balmy flowers,  
Creatures of beauty and delight.

“The earth is thine ; thy creature, man.  
Thine are all worlds, all suns that shine ;  
Darkness and light, and life and death,  
Whate'er all space inhabiteth,  
Creator, Father, all is thine.”

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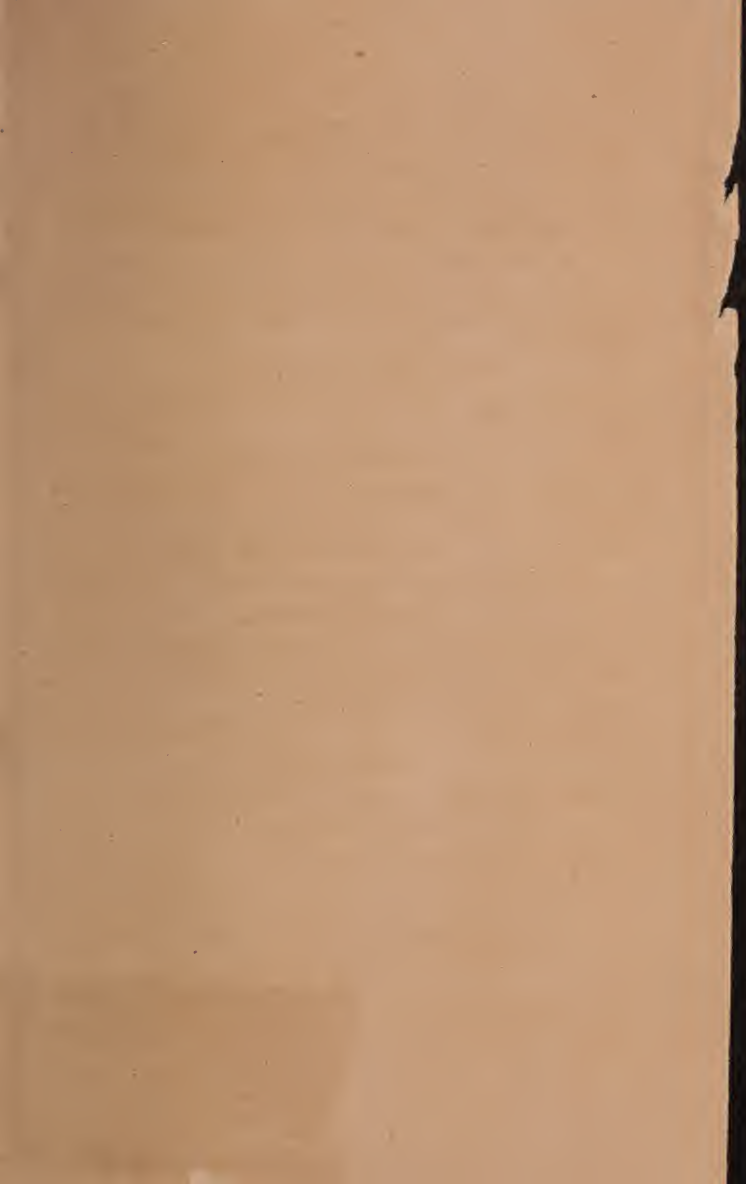
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